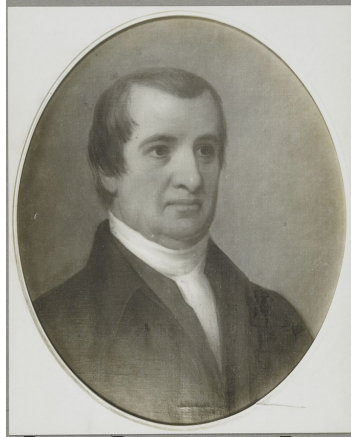




Abraham Clark

February 15, 1726 - September 15, 1794

Rahway, New Jersey

Abraham Clark, New Jersey surveyor, "poor man's counselor," signer of the Declaration of Independence, and member of the early United States House, died at his home near Rahway, New Jersey, on September 15, 1794. He was sixty-eight. Sunstroke closed a life that had begun in Elizabethtown farm country and ended still arguing for a republic that did not forget ordinary debtors and small freeholders.

Born February 15, 1726, too frail for heavy field work, Clark learned surveying and taught himself enough law to advise neighbors who could not afford a polished bar. Essex County knew him as clerk and sheriff before the provincial crisis made him a radical of independence. When New Jersey replaced conservative Continental Congress delegates in June 1776, Clark arrived in Philadelphia in time to vote for and sign the Declaration. His private letters that summer sound like a man who understood the wager: free state or conquered country.

War touched his household - two sons were prisoners - yet he kept returning to Congress and to New Jersey's assemblies. He later sat in the Second and Third Congresses under Washington, a Pro-Administration voice who still carried the habits of a local counselor rather than a courtier. Illness kept him from the Constitutional Convention; the House service that followed was his last national work.

He died near Rahway on September 15, 1794. Clark Township and Abraham Clark High School keep the name; Rahway Cemetery keeps the stone.

What survives beyond the signature is a civic temperament: independence without swagger, law without contempt for the poor, and a willingness to stand in Philadelphia when standing was expensive. Notice Nearby

records the death date so September 15 still carries a Founder's quiet New Jersey exit beside louder American calendars.

Services

Died near Rahway, New Jersey, September 15, 1794. Signer of the Declaration of Independence; U.S. Representative; interred at Rahway Cemetery, Rahway, New Jersey.

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